

## **The Impact of Migration on Student Mental Health: Inferences to Teaching**

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## Abstract

This paper has been developed based on my learning experiences within the Master of Education program at Thompson Rivers University. As well as, my time teaching at Burdett School while working with the Low German Mennonite student population; and experiencing the interrupted mental health and well-being they face given their migration, forced or otherwise, regularly to and from Mexico; as well as their acculturation. Through my journey as a teacher in this program I have come to understand more about minority groups and the struggles that they face. I have learned that the upheaval involved in being a child migrant impacts their mental health and well-being; their ability to learn, and, as a result their future successes. This group of children need help because they are a part of all of our futures. Not only that, educators need personal and professional development on this topic so that they can in turn support these students in the way that is necessary to make a positive change in their futures. In this paper I argue that migrant children's mental health and well-being is impacted negatively when they migrate based on the upheaval involved in moving, forced or otherwise, as well as, acculturation; in turn, their support in the classroom should be unique. I make this claim because we should be concerned about migration and acculturation as a traumatic event, and Murphey and Sacks (2019) outline that ethnicities change the percentage of students who suffer from adverse childhood experiences to a larger number (p.9). Not only does acculturation impact migrant students, but the negative impacts migration has on mental health, create lasting negative: social, emotional, and educational effects (Dombo & Sabatino, 2019, p.18). The implications that can be made are that migrant children need culturally competent and caring individuals in the classroom to advocate for them, and make necessary changes to their personal lives and professional practices to positively impact migrant student's present lives and futures.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

This past year in 2020, 61 880 youth have immigrated to Canada (Statista Research Department, 2020). If that is just this past year, think about five years at that rate, that is 309 400 youth immigrants. There are 264 urban cities in Canada. Given that number of immigrant youth, if we divide that number between Canada's urban cities, each city accepts roughly 234 immigrant children into their school each year. The exercise presented above is not exact by any means given that each urban city in Canada is not the same size but the exercise is meant to bring forward the reason I am passionate about this topic as well as the need to advocate for migrant students and their unique needs in the classroom. It is one of the reasons that I will discuss the impacts of migration on children's mental health, and well-being through the topics of: acculturation, discrimination, time frame in host country, mental disorders, stressors, family dynamics and the migration process. By the end of this chapter you will understand how I came to choose this topic, why this topic is significant and how the paper will proceed given my argument.

### **My Journey and Developing an Interest in the Topic**

My Journey with the online M.Ed. program at Thompson Rivers University started merely one year after graduating from my Bachelor of Education. I have always appreciated the idea of lifelong learning and I knew from the time I started my Education Degree that I would take my Master of Education. With that being said, I did not know it would be so soon. At the time I was substitute teaching, I was not finding much luck in the hiring process and it appeared that I had no edge on the other applicants, so I made the decision to take on higher education. Eight months later and seven courses into my Master of Education I was hired at Burdett School, fifty minutes away from my hometown in which I commuted every day. Burdett School is in the

village of Burdett, Alberta. It is home to thirteen wonderful teachers and 250 Low German Mennonite students. Upon accepting the employment offer, I had no clue the personal and professional development that was coming my way.

During my time at Burdett I was simultaneously completing two Master of Education courses: Introduction to Secondary School Counselling and Theories in Counselling and I had just completed the Diversity course two months prior in the summer semester. This created a perfect storm that made me realize a huge gap in teacher education and understanding. Between those three courses, and my experiences at Burdett School it led me to the topic of, the impact of migration on the students I serve, and the impact of said migration on student's well-being and mental health, especially pertaining to the school environment. I have always been passionate about trauma due to circumstances of my past but, falling in love with all forty-five of my Burdett School students is what really drove me to do the work to advocate for migrant students in the classroom through this paper.

Upon realizing this new found passion, and realizing I knew what I would write my capstone paper on, I reflected upon what my Master of Education had taught me to attack this idea. When I started my Master of Education journey I thought it was going to make me a better educator, and it did, but not the way I had anticipated. It made me a better person and in turn that made me a better educator. The course Understanding and Managing Conflict made me a more understanding person that was able to realize why it is important to seek all possible perspectives before replying or reacting; that is what I did in regards to this paper, I learned about all sides of the issue before presenting my arguments, and details. Then, the Diversity course taught me the repercussions of white privilege and why turning a blind eye because it feels like it does not impact me as a white female is not at all the right thing to do, ignorance is not okay when it

comes to discrimination of any oppressed group. Moreover, I realized how important it is to seek out what our personal micro-aggression tendencies are and how to fix them even though they may be unintentional, because they do have an impact. Lastly, in the Introduction to Secondary School Counselling course which I took while at Burdett School there was an assignment which challenged me to really think about my surroundings from a counselling perspective which allowed me to zero in on the upheaval migrant students feel, which ignited this new passion.

All of those experiences brought me to the realization that this group of students needs to be advocated for in the classroom, and it was a *journey*. As this paper progresses and I take you through that journey I first feel that it is important share my positionality and social identity within this world. As a white, native born Canadian, through this program I have realized the ignorance that I participated in for too many years. It is no longer okay to silently look through a lens of white privilege and avoid tough topics because they do not directly impact me; especially while students suffer from circumstances out of their control. Fortunately, given this revelation I have a unique opportunity to be the voice for people who should have a voice, but do not. There is always a time to take action and that time is now; through this paper, as an opportunity to give back to the people who touched me and changed me during my time at Burdett School.

### **Significance of the Topic**

I think understanding the impact of migration on mental health is extremely important because it is a reality and ignoring it does not heal those that experience it. Migrant students are experiencing adversity, and if teachers (like myself before this program) do not realize the large differences and inequities that these students have in relation to students who have never migrated, then we are doing our migrant students a disservice. Acculturation is defined as “assimilation to a different culture, typically the dominant one” (Oxford Dictionary, 2020).

Which in some cases can be extremely difficult for migrant students given that it feels as though assimilation requires deconstruction of their personal identity which negatively impacts their mental health (Kouider, Koglin & Petermann, 2015).

Although the intent of assimilation or acculturation are not to demolish immigrants sense of personal identity, it happens based on the fact that they are living in a country that may not share the same culture as theirs; however, that does not make it any less important or any less of an issue when it comes to assessing the mental health of immigrants. Not only does acculturation and mental health impact migrant students but, time frame in host country, discrimination, family dynamics and the migration process all also have significant impact on the well-being and mental health of the migrant students in our classrooms. All educators should be aware of these impacts in order to facilitate a positive learning experience for these students because ignorance is not bliss just because it does not impact you. That is why this topic is significant, given the vast number of migrant students we welcome into our country a year, and the amount of different aspects that impact mental health and well-being, specifically for migrant students; it makes this a topic one that cannot be ignored any longer given the increased amount of immigration. In 2019 “Canada's sustained population growth is driven mostly (82.2%) by the arrival of a large number of immigrants and non-permanent residents.” (Statistics Canada, 2019).

### **Presenting the Argument**

In this paper I claim that migrant children’s mental health and well-being is impacted negatively when they migrate based on the upheaval involved in moving, forced or otherwise, as well as, acculturation; in turn, their support in the classroom should be unique. I make this claim for the following reasons: Thomas, Crosby and Vanderhaar (2019) identified that traumatic experiences in children is a hidden health crisis that cannot be ignored any longer given that

students are the future of society; making it important that we are not only aware of the negative impacts of migration and acculturation as teachers, but that we know how to support students who are experiencing this. As well as the idea that migrant students whether refugee or immigrant may struggle with a number of externalized and/or internalized mental disorders and stressors that impact mental health negatively and hinder students' successes; as they currently are not being readily recognized in classrooms (Kouider et al., 2015). Lastly, according to Sangalang et al., (2019) “post-migration stressors tied to resettlement in another country pose significant risk for psychological problems and poor health” and given that information traumatic experiences for immigrants are more common than currently recognized (p.909). Through this paper I will explore the impact of migration on children’s mental health and well-being through the lenses of: acculturation, discrimination, time frame in host country, mental disorders, stressors, family dynamics and the migration process.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

Portes and Rivas (2011) address the idea that “The rapid growth of the immigrant population in the United States is one of the most important demographic and social trends confronting this society” (p.220). Given that information this literature review will present information to support the claim of this paper which is; that migrant children’s mental health and well-being is impacted negatively when they migrate based on the upheaval involved in moving, forced or otherwise, as well as, acculturation; in turn, their support in the classroom should be unique. There are three main points that will be presented in this literature review that support the claim of this paper which have continually emerged from the literature. This literature review will begin with an introduction to the terminology and then will be followed by the first point which is, acculturation and resettlement; the challenges migrant children face in regards to this task. The second point is, externalized and internalized mental disorders and stressors that migrant children experience. Lastly, migrant children as the future of society and the importance of supporting migrant children as they navigate the education system. The reason for this literature review aligns with Kouider et al., (2015), that it is common that migration presents itself as a risk to mental health problems in children and adolescents. Especially given the information presented by Vega et al., (2015) “When relocating to a new country, whether migrants leave voluntarily or involuntarily, they often experience significant stressors that adversely affect their mental health and well-being” (p.360)

### **Definition of Terms**

In regards to terminology there are a few terms that are useful to define. These terms are as follows: migrants, migrant generations, acculturation and the four stages that coincide. The term migrants is used to describe people “that immigrate for varying reasons, such as

employment opportunities or seeking refuge after escaping political dangers in their native country” (Shoshani et al., 2015, p.182). Oftentimes the terms migrant and immigrant are used interchangeably, and they are similar, however there is one main difference to keep in mind: An immigrant always begins the journey as a migrant (someone who is moving from one place to another for different reasons), but a migrant does not always end the journey as an immigrant (a permanent resident of the place they move) (Preemptive Love, 2019). Migrants are grouped by generation based on their time of arrival to the host country. First generation migrants would be initial immigrants, those that move and permanently settle first within the family; 1.5 generation migrants are classified as children who immigrate with their first generation families; lastly, second generation immigrants are those born in the new country with immigrant parents (Shoshani et al., 2015). It is important to note that “Each generation faces unique challenges in adapting to the new culture and society, which are shaped by policies, individual experiences, and structure of communities” (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001 as cited in Shoshani et al., 2015, p. 182).

Acculturation is defined as “assimilation to a different culture, typically the dominant one” (Oxford Dictionary, 2020). According to State University of New York (1998) there are four stages of acculturation to consider: euphoria, culture shock, anomie and assimilation. Euphoria is initial excitement to do with their current situation until culture shock hits, which is defined by State University of New York (1998) as a person viewing their new world with resentment, they are oftentimes angry at others for not understanding them, this phenomenon is associated with the learner’s feelings correlating to their resettlement. Next is anomie also known as culture stress, some problems of resettlement are solved while others remain unsolved, at this time the individual becomes more empathetic to the culture in which they are resettling. Lastly,

assimilation or adaptation is a feeling of recovery and acceptance of the new culture and an understanding of their new personal identity.

### **Impacts of Migration on Mental Health and Well-Being**

A few points are important to note in this section before proceeding. When it comes to mental health status, or psychological well-being it is important to mention that it is not a “one size fits all” story (Kim et al., 2018, p.170). Every person is different and exceptional in their own right and that idea must be taken into consideration while exploring this paper. Kim et al., (2018) introduces the following idea, that whether children of immigrants or native children fare better, the same, or worse than the other, is based completely on their defining characteristics and the type of mental health problem in question. Several if not all studies brought forward the same statistical problem that needs to be addressed and that is the amount migration is growing. Prior research by Sangalang et al., (2019) showed that “traumatic experiences tied to the migration process are perhaps more common among immigrants than widely recognized” (p. 916).

A few more broad ideas to consider about migration well-being and mental health that were found in the research are: vulnerability of migrant children, parental perspectives and family conflict impacts. Koudier et al., (2015) expresses that

“The development in migrant childhood is more vulnerable than for natives. For example, finding personal identity in adolescence is generally a great challenge. But with a migrant background, and especially if both parents are foreign born, this development task is much more difficult” (p. 1254).

Koudier et al., (2015) goes on to say that the time period in host countries influences mental health, as well as social orientation and competence in migrant children. When it comes to parental perspectives, they impact migrant children’s well-being and mental health. Just like

nonimmigrant children, unsupportive parents, and parents with little sympathy, increase depressive symptoms of children and this is no different for migrant children (Kouider et al., 2015, p.1252). Kouider et al., (2015) also mentions that parenting stress, and migrant mothers who are depressed themselves, impact internalizing mental health symptoms of their children and may increase the likelihood of their children becoming depressed. Lastly, language brokering and low language competence creates an immense challenge for migrant children and their mental health (Kouider et al., 2015, p.1256). Likewise, family conflict creates a layer of disadvantage and mental instability when correlated to migrant families, which negatively impacts migrant children and increases depressive and anxiety disorders as well as psychological distress (Sangalang et al., 2019). Sangalang et al., (2019) continues to say that “the most consistent predictor of negative mental health across all refugee and immigrant groups was family conflict” (p.915).

### *Acculturation and Resettlement*

A common theme within the research is that acculturation stress has a significant impact on migrant children. The research that supports this idea is in the following studies through the following points. Kouider et al., (2015) mentions that “acculturation stress is proven a significant influence in mental health: the adolescents with higher acculturation stress had higher internalizing symptoms” (p.1251). Kim et al., (2018) supports that youth have a higher risk of mental health problems than native children due to their “exposure to economic disadvantage, discrimination, and disruption of social ties.” (p.168). The stress of acculturation as mentioned above can lead to negative mental health problems like “anxiety, low self-esteem, identity confusion, alcoholism, and drug use” (Ponterotto et al., 1998; Roberts & Schnieder, 1999 as cited in Sonderegger & Barrett, 2004, p.342). Sonderegger and Barrett (2004) mention that it is

important to note that not all migrant groups or generations undergo the same experiences in regard to their emigration. Mirroring that point, Archuleta & Lakhwani (2016) see significant changes across life domains and generations that “indicate that acculturation may pose meaningful disruptions that may influence how trauma is experienced” (p.120) Shoshani et al., (2015) outlines that there are two independent parts to the process of acculturation: heritage cultures and how well the individual relates to their new culture. “This bidimensional model proposed that high involvement in both the heritage and receiving cultures is the most adaptive approach to acculturation and relates to better mental health outcomes (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006 as cited in Shoshani et al., 2015, p.183).

Another central theme among the literature is the transition period, what is often referred to as the transit period or post-migration period of migration. There are three stages of migration that impact youth: pre-migration, migration, and post-migration; all three stages can impact migrant youths’ functioning (Vega et al., 2015). Konkina et al., (2015) found that migration and life in a different environment has a “systemic impact on the child’s personality that exacerbates the need to adjust to the new living conditions” (p.215). Similarly, Vega et al., (2015) emphasizes that the transition to living in a new country can be extremely stressful, and difficult given that many things within their lives are out of their control and unknown such as their job, where they will live, whether they can speak the language or if they have a support system. Echoing that point is Shoshani et al., (2015) in that “living in a state of uncertainty about what the future holds, fear of deportation, and persisting difficulty in establishing long term aspirations can be a heavy burden, especially for children and adolescents” (p.193). Post-Migration embodies the idea of acculturation and the goal of assimilation and adaptation. Sangalang et al., (2019) outlines the importance of understanding the detrimental aspect to post-

migration in regard to migrants as well as, stressors tied to resettlement in the host country; these stressors “pose a significant risk for psychological problems and poor mental health” (p.909). Similarly Vega et al., (2015) supports the idea that all three stages, especially the post-migration stage, have a significant impact on migrant children. However, Chan et al., (2009) reported that, the impact of post-migration on migrant children’s mental health has much to do with the reason they are migrating and the change of socioeconomic status during resettlement. Lastly, in the study by Shoshani et al., (2015) it was found that the immigrants generation status has an impact on resettlement and adaptation success as well as psychological well-being in the country they are attempting to assimilate to.

Arivdsdotter et al., (2015) defines psychological distress as “a state of emotional suffering typically characterized by symptoms of depression and anxiety” (p.687). In the study by Sonderegger and Barrett (2004) they found that “Trans-national studies have revealed that moving to a new country and learning social norms of a new culture is a difficult process often plagued with psychological distress” (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999 as cited in Sonderegger & Barrett, 2004, p.342). Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2012) found “that acculturation may play a crucial role in the relationship between immigrant children’s developmental and psychological well-being” (as cited in Shoshani et al., 2015, p.184). Similarly, Kim et al., (2018) presents that previous research demonstrated that acculturation stressors reflected in a generation acculturation gap, are risk factors for depression, disruptive behaviors and poor internalized mental disorders in migrant youth and families. Similarly, to Kim et al., (2018) last point, Shoshani et al., (2015) relates to that point in that, “immigrant generation status has also been suspected to impact immigrants’ acculturative success and psychological well-being” (p.183). Lastly, Sangalang et

al., (2019) mirrors the ideas above with one difference; acculturative stressors are linked to greater psychological distress for refugees versus immigrants.

Contradicting evidence from the research did emerge in regard to the claim of the paper and that involves the idea of a term called the “immigrant paradox”. The immigrant paradox poses the following idea that is supported by Kim et al., (2018), Vega et al., (2015), and Shoshani et al., (2015) in that, people who leave their home origins and create a new life in a host country are, as a group, healthy in comparison to their native individuals in said host country. To explain further it is “the unexpected, initial advantage many new immigrants may have, and then the decline that occurs with time on many dimensions of adjustment” (Coll, Marks, 2012; Suarez- Orozco, et al., 2009 as cited in Shoshani et al., 2015, p. 183). Vega et al., (2015) presents the idea that with proper care and attention, it is possible that displaced migrant youth would not be negatively impacted by acculturation within several years of their arrival.

### *Mental Disorders and Stressors*

The words external and internal are descriptive ways to differentiate between mental disorders and where they happen within the body. For example, Kouider et al., (2015) explains conduct disorders (violent outbursts or disrespectful speech) and hyperactivity as externalizing disorders, and disorders such as depression or anxiety (things that happen within) as internalizing disorders. Kouider et al., (2015) also defines mental disorders within the context of migrant children as “syndromes with disturbances in different capabilities as emotion regulation, individual cognition or behavior.” (p.1241). Shoshani et al., (2015) outlines that consistent with previous studies, migrant adolescents are more susceptible to mental health problems.

Kim et al., (2018) found that both internal and external mental health are the result of manifestations of children’s distress, cultural norms and other social conditions. Kouider et al.,

(2015) presents that higher internalizing problems are found in migrant children than native children. Similarly, Shoshani et al., (2015) outlines that immigrant groups had higher levels of mental health symptoms internal and external. Kim et al., (2018) continues with the idea that “externalizing and internalizing types of mental health problems that occur in childhood are associated with poor school performance and low social competence” (p.168). Lastly, “Studies have shown that migrant children are at risk for psychological symptomatology such as externalizing behaviors, anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorders” (Muradet al., 2003 as cited in Shoshani et al., 2015, p.182).

Sangalang et al., (2019) expresses that discrimination among migrant children predicted poorer mental health and that they are discriminated against in regard to their race, ethnicity, religion, language bias, as well as harmful social and political dialogue involving immigrants. Similarly, Kim et al., (2018) supports this by explaining that:

Chronic exposure to high levels of discrimination is associated with negative mental health outcomes, including depression and disruptive behavior problems. Harsh and enduring racial prejudice, discrimination and stressful socioeconomic conditions, to which Black/African Americans have been exposed form many generations, may be even more pernicious than the stresses and challenges of initial resettlement and acculturation (p.171).

Likewise, Sangalang et al., (2019) associated discrimination with greater psychological distress, as well as, depressive and anxiety disorders. Sonderegger and Barrett (2004) express that students will oftentimes hide or change one’s ethnicity to seek acceptance by peers in their new culture and to avoid discrimination.

A subset of discrimination is micro-aggressions. Micro-aggressions are “the small acts of exclusion and marginalization committed by a dominant group toward a minority” (Brookfield, 2014, p.93). A very important point to mention which is outlined by Brookfield (2014) is that micro-aggressions are never consciously intended to cause discriminative feelings towards a person of color; in that sense, “they are truly ideological, so fully assimilated as to be unnoticeable until someone brings them to our attention” (Brookfield, 2014, p.93). In that, people “who view themselves as being without any stereotypes, biases, and prejudices are most likely underestimating the impact of their socialization” (Corey & Corey, 2016, p.115).

Contradicting evidence toward the claim of this paper was found in regard to this topic in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescents (Add Health) this study showed that first generation immigrant youth of any race had less symptoms and more positive well-being than their native born peers, after assimilation and adaptation to the host culture (Kim et al., 2018). In addition, Add Health (2018) mentioned that first generation immigrants were less likely to show external problems than second generation adolescents (Kim et al., 2018). Furthermore, drawing the conclusion that there is a chance that mental disorders have more to do with being adolescent than they do with being a migrant or immigrant.

### *Importance of Support*

It has been identified in the literature above the challenges migrant children face. Given that information several studies suggest that there are many challenges to migrant children in regards to education and adapting or assimilating to a new education system with a new set of cultural beliefs and norms. Similarly, Vega et al., 2015 presents that entering a new educational system is extremely challenging for immigrant youth. Shoshani et al., (2015) emphasizes that schools are

The most influential developmental contexts that shape adolescents' lives, and can support the development of competencies and skills that allow for successful adaptation . . . since school plays an instrumental role in helping them acquire cultural values and norms that are beneficial for their acculturation and immersion into the new "host" country (p.181).

Likewise, Konkina et al., (2015) reveals the need for socio-psycho-pedagogical support and assistance to migrant children in new educational environments with social and cultural aspects. Following that Guo (2012) states that English as a second language students are denied access to support that is paramount in their academic success. Similarly, Vega et al., mentions that "language barriers, adjusting to a new curriculum, appropriate grade placement, and learning the cultural normal of a new school system, may affect immigrant and refugee students" (p. 361).

Previous studies have shown the need for support of migrant children in educational settings and the following research will address the ideas of how support can be beneficial to migrant students in an educational setting. Vega et al., (2015) presents that "schools have the potential to create positive learning environments that welcomes migrant and refugee students and that protects against mental health issues." (p. 361). Comparably, Shoshani et al., (2015) discusses that schools can provide opportunities for social mobility and support as well as connection with confidants, in many cases teachers or peers that the migrant child can share their feelings and difficulties with. However, in many cases positive learning environments and being a confidante involves a level of cultural competence and awareness which is a process of growth that teachers must participate in (Vega et al., 2015, p.368).

Sonderregger and Barrett (2004) point out that research "endeavours to date have not delineated whether situational variables such as social support have a universal influence on

young migrants from different cultural backgrounds” (p. 342). Vega et al., (2015) continues to outline that preventive and intervention strategies and services increase the likelihood of success in academics and social-emotional well-being and that mental health services following migration can “prevent further issues from developing and current issues from worsening” (p.361).

Ways in which educators can support migrant students in educational settings are important to note, the following research brings forward ideas to better the current educational setting migrant students find themselves in. Shoshani et al., (2015) presents that “By engaging and empowering migrant youth through meaningful activities that cultivate their knowledge and sense of belonging, the school can become a central, and encouraging place that fosters resilience and supports the needs of migrant youth and their families” (p.195). Similarly, Kim et al., (2018) outlines that schools are encouraged to work with community based organizations that focus on the needs of specific migrant students, to build skills and foster belonging. Likewise, Konkina et al., (2015) states that “statistical data analysis highlights the need to organize socio-psycho-pedagogical support of migrant children, aimed at providing help and protection to them” (p.212).

### **Summary**

Migrant children face an array of challenges during the process of acculturation through family conflict, internalized and externalized mental disorders, new culture, assimilation stressors, discrimination, micro-aggressions, vulnerability to a new life and many more challenges that are not listed here. Shoshani et al., (2015) presented a statistic that “between 1990 and 2014, the number of international migrants grew from 154 million to 232 million” (Pitkanen & Carrera, 2014 as cited in Shoshani et al., 2015, p.182) this insinuates a growing challenge and

need for attention as to how to address the needs of this growing population of students in classrooms. The essence of the literature review is that there is a need to reconstruct the label of difference, “There is a need to move from viewing differences as deficit to understanding and appreciating differences as the most fundamental trait of humanity, as positive, and enriching our lives” (Abdi et al., 2012 as cited in Guo, 2012, p.16). Once again as outlined by Corey and Corey (2016) people “who view themselves as being without any stereotypes, biases, and prejudices are most likely underestimating the impact of their socialization” we must look inward to see where we can make a change to improve what the literature has presented.

Given all the information presented in this literature it is imperative that classrooms are equitable versus equal. That teachers are professionally developed in regard to strategies; as well as, behave as, and take the initiative to be culturally competent individuals and educators. The next chapter will serve as a motivator for educators who are not culturally competent or aware of their impact on migrant students to realize their privilege in all aspects of their lives versus migrant students, not just white privilege; and to make changes in their life and practice where necessary. Classrooms need to evolve with the changes in society and in society’s people. The literature has shown how society’s people have changed and the next chapter will outline how to facilitate that change in a unique classroom environment.

### **Chapter Three: Application to Teaching**

In this chapter I will focus on the idea from my claim that, support for migrant students in the classroom should be unique. As a reminder, in this paper I argue that migrant children's mental health and well-being is impacted negatively when they migrate based on the upheaval involved in moving, forced or otherwise, as well as, acculturation; in turn, their support in the classroom should be unique. I will start this chapter with my experiences at Burdett School and the things I observed during that time that lead to this paper and my passion to advocate for migrant students. Then, I will focus on the pedagogy of teaching in regards to supporting migrant students including the importance of an equitable classroom. Lastly, strategies to support migrant students uniquely in the classroom.

#### **Migrant Students at Burdett School**

Burdett School is home to 250 Mennonite students; many of those students migrate back and forth to Mexico during the winter months due to a lack of work in Canada. Roughly 40 percent of the student population at Burdett School would be considered migrants; individuals who moved from one place to another and/or move in a back and forth pattern. Whereas all of the students at Burdett School would be considered immigrants; varying in regard to the generation of immigration they belong to. Most of the students' parents are 1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrants, the first of their family to migrate to Canada; therefore, most of the students at Burdett School would then be either 1.5 generation immigrants or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants. It is quite common from my personal experience to have a student there one day and then gone the next with little to no warning, and if there was a warning, the warning was short. One other thing to keep in mind as I talk about my experience at Burdett School, is that the Mennonite students are English Language Learners given that their first language is German. This is important to

point out given that a migrant students in other schools would most likely have a different first language and would also be English Language Learners.

During my experience teaching grade six; I made observations that lead me to realize that this particular group of students (migrant students) are in need of help in regard to their mental health and academic development. Within my grade six homeroom classroom of 26 students there was roughly five students that were at grade level academically. There were 11 students that were significantly below grade level, and the rest were below grade level but able to participate in literacy and numeracy having fallen only a few years behind. This large span of capabilities in the classroom, was due to many factors including: parents that do not speak English and as a result their students are their language brokers, migrant students struggling with the language themselves as they are learning a second language, family conflict, different cultural norms, multiple migration, internal migration, and parent resettlement or acculturation. All of which emerged within the literature and I will blend with my experiences at Burdett School.

Internal migration is when a family moves within the country and it is not to be forgotten about as it has similar repercussions to migrating to and from a different country. I had one student that attended Burdett School, he was in grade six and had been enrolled in twenty different schools before attending Burdett School. In three weeks' time he was onto his 21<sup>st</sup> school. The important thing to note about this case is that this student was a Mennonite student, and the parents were internally migrating in search of work. From this example it is important to realize that the immigrant families first and foremost must be able to support themselves and their families and at times that leads to unfortunate circumstances for the students involved, which needs to be considered in the classroom.

Multiple migration, although similar to internal migration is when the family goes back and forth from their origin country to their host country for extended periods of time. In the lives of the Mennonite families at Burdett School this period of time is about three to six months. During this time we can presume that just as Canadian curriculum is not the same across different provinces, curriculum in Mexico would not be the same as the Alberta curriculum. The students that migrate to and from Mexico were the students that tended to be the most behind academically due to the fact that they are not getting taught one curriculum but two, and that the curriculums varied from one another; therefore, there is large gaps in the education these students receive. This discrepancy does not only impact multiple migration students but also students that internally migrated.

Another idea I wanted to talk about that also emerged in the literature was the ideas of: family conflicts, language brokering, different cultural norms, struggling with the language themselves and parent resettlement or acculturation having an impact on poor mental health and well-being in accordance to migrant students. The home lives of migrant student's impact them when it comes to their mental health, and their ability to function as progressing and productive students at school. In the literature review chapter I mentioned that language brokering and low language competence creates an immense challenge for migrant children and their mental health (Kouider et al., 2015). Many students at Burdett School had these experiences, and not only were they learning a language that was not their native tongue but when they went home from school they were expected to assist their parents. Luckily migrant students learn English when they are at school; however, their parents are left to learn it on their own, if at all. This puts stress on migrant students because if their parents do not speak English, when their parents need to do

simple tasks that involve anyone that speaks English they need their child to translate and/or communicate for them; this is called language brokering.

Some examples of this situation are: calling a repair man, getting groceries, going out into public to run an errand and/or communicating with the school. This not only causes stress for the student but exhaustion as the child is now taking on two roles within the family; This experience increases the responsibility and exposure to adult tasks and conversations that non migrant students would not be included in at home. Which is outlined by Kouider et al., (2014) in that “mother language proficiency influences adolescent mental health in a negative way” (p.1252).

A different way that migrant student’s mental health and well-being is impacted is by having different cultural norms than their host country. When it comes to Mennonite families, they are very hardworking families, oftentimes involved in hard working career, such as agriculture or hands on industries. Most Mennonite students only complete school up to grade nine and then they drop out of school and join their parents in their hardworking careers or homemaking if they are a woman; the culture is very traditional. This specific cultural norm can create an issue in the classroom given that students feel a pressure to adhere to those cultural norms and as per their parents view they have a hard time seeing value in the education system even though they as individuals may want more for themselves. As addressed in Kouider et al., (2014) “finding personal identity in adolescence is generally a great challenge but with a migrant background, and especially if both parents are foreign born, this development task is much more difficult” (p.1254). This can lead to family conflict and stress in their home life, as not all Mennonite students want the same life their parents have.

The experiences I had at Burdett shaped my ideology on teaching, as well as, made me aware of discrimination, the importance of cultural awareness and the impact of migration on these

students; I am grateful for that experience every day. Moreover, it is unfortunate that not everyone, nor enough people have the opportunity to work at a school like Burdett School, especially white individuals. I was outnumbered by a different culture, a beautiful culture that is oftentimes stereotyped and discriminated against due to that very culture and traditional way of life. Seeing the world through that lens and not being a part of the majority was eye opening and transformational. The world is vast, and filled with all kinds of people who present differently; these differences should be viewed as a positive not as disruptive and a hateful negative. I always keep in mind that it is always within my power to internalize new perspectives but should I dislike said perspective it should never be a thought to use my power to hate on someone that is different than me for bringing something new to the table.

### **Pedagogy to Support Migrant Students**

In this paper I argue that migrant children's mental health and well-being is impacted negatively when they migrate based on the upheaval involved in moving, forced or otherwise, as well as, acculturation; in turn, their support in the classroom should be unique. Which is why I believe in an equitable classroom as paramount to migrant student's success given their unique needs in the classroom. According to Hanover Research (2017) "in an equitable classroom environment, students of all backgrounds (e.g., race, nationality, gender) have the same opportunities to learn and develop their knowledge" (p.1). This aligns with the goal of cultural competence, which is, "to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures." (What does it mean to be culturally competent? para 7). Taking that information into consideration it startles me how any educator could still believe that an equal classroom is the best option for any group of students, never mind migrant students. When I think of those definitions it astonishes me why any educator would believe in an equality for all anymore;

mainly because, why would I not want my students to feel as though they all have the same opportunities to learn and develop? If there was no differentiation of instructional strategies I personally could not see any student benefitting in that classroom except for those that are privileged in every category which when I think about my current classroom in West Lethbridge, which is predominantly white and privileged that category fits very few of my students; and within my grade six classroom at Burdett School zero of my students fit into that category; therefore, zero of them would have benefitted from an equal classroom.

From my pedagogical standpoint, classrooms and schools must combat racism and by doing so the first step is acknowledging personal micro-aggressions. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, micro-aggressions are “the small acts of exclusion and marginalization committed by a dominant group toward a minority” they are oftentimes unintentional but yet still hurtful (Brookfield, 2014, p.93). The question remains, how does a culturally competent educator understand what their micro-aggressions are? I understand that the answer to this question lies in the idea that if the answer were so simple everyone would have already acknowledged and eliminated their micro-aggressions. Brookfield’s (2014) experience supports my thoughts on this topic,

By sharing my regular commission of racial and gender micro-aggressions and talking about my racist impulses and instincts, I hope to teach doing this work is incredibly complex. I hope to communicate to White colleagues the deep-seated nature of learned racism and the message, as soon as you think you are making progress in combating this, you will say or do something that will reveal how racist ideology has its hooks into you. So, a crucial element of White adult educators’ pedagogy about race is to teach our own racism (p.95).

In my experience, the truth is: it takes soul searching, recognition of privilege, attention, cultural competence, failure, a supportive environment to do so and colleagues who are willing to speak up and support you in that journey. It will not happen overnight and you most likely will never rid yourself of every micro-aggression but, I believe that if you stay focused on continual growth and know that you are doing the best that you can, you will progress and as a result reduce these small acts of exclusion and marginalization. I personally struggle with the idea that you cannot rid yourself of all micro-aggressions especially as a recovering perfectionist who loves to accomplish a task; however, it has been important in my growth to remember the idea outlined by Corey and Corey (2016) in that it, it is extremely hard to outrun your socialization. As a lifelong learner and as mentioned, a recovering perfectionist, who loves to accomplish a task, I have learned to accept the fact that the hard thing about growth is that is truly never done, accomplished or finished; that I must be willing to continue the uncomfortable essence of growth in my career and personal life because that work is important as an educators educating future generations.

In the beginning of my journey to recognizing and riding myself of micro-aggressions that cause marginalization and exclusion toward migrant and immigrant youth, I found it a great first step to understand my own privilege. Not just my privilege in regard to my skin color but the privilege in all aspects of my life. I was able to note that I am privileged to some degree in regard to all of the following categories: gender, housing, religion, sexuality, race, income, language, family, and ability. Once I understood my privilege, I was able to complete the same activity to get an idea of the privilege the students at Burdett School face as migrant students. Given that discovery I compared my privilege and theirs and made some inferences as to what their perspectives on life were and/or the difficulties they face in their current situations. I did my

best to be compassionate and empathetic, and attempt to understand where they were coming from. This gave me a new perspective on these students in the classroom and the adversity that they face on a daily basis in order to merely show up and be present with me, in my classroom, for the day.

In extension, I believe that being a culturally competent educator is attempting and being willing to understand and learn about the different cultures that are in my classroom. Knowledge is power, the more I learned about my student's culture the more I understood them and in turn I was able to understand their needs within the classroom. Prior to completing my M.Ed., I did not give much thought to my privilege, I knew that I lived a fortunate life but I never really stopped to think about how the privilege I took for granted and how it impacted others around me and/or how privilege had impacted migrant students mental health and well-being. Upon realizing my privilege and my perception of migrant students privilege I was able to see the importance of combating white privilege, discrimination and micro-aggressions in my classroom through an equitable classroom and the hidden curriculum because it was no longer acceptable to take the stance that it does not impact me; therefore, I do not acknowledge it. I now acknowledge my privilege and do my best to be empathetic and understanding of my students privilege because I care about my students; therefore, I decided to care about what makes them who they are.

As migrant students start to settle in their host country I believe it is extremely important for educators to find compassion and empathy for what these students are going through; as well as the challenges, stresses and fears that they face during the stages of acculturation and resettlement. During my time at Burdett I learned of a program that services Alberta but had just made a Bow Island, Alberta branch, it is called "Parents as Teachers". This organization does its best to support all types of families in whatever way they need whether that is with simple tasks

or bigger problems. These types of services are great, especially for families that are doing their best to settle into their new homes. Knowing that information as an educator I personally think it is extremely helpful to guide students families to this type of a resources so that they are aware of the support that is available; in my experience doing this is important because if the resource is not mentioned, migrant families who are new to their host country are unaware that it even exists. I believe that by doing this it is possible to alleviate the following idea from the literature review chapter, in that “the most consistent predictor of negative mental health across all refugee and immigrant groups was family conflict” (Sangalang, 2019, p.915). As well as, addressing the idea that I mentioned in the literature review from Kim et al., (2018) that schools are encouraged to work with community based organizations to build skills and foster belonging for migrant families. By facilitating support for migrant students, families, it benefits the students moving forward academically, and in accordance to Sangalang (2019) help their mental health because it could help minimize family conflict due to stress of the parents.

The ideas I have presented are where I started in my personal exploration to becoming a more culturally competent and intentional educator; as well as, how I ensure that migrant students have a positive experience in my classroom while uplifting their mental health and well-being during their experience with acculturation. It is of the utmost importance to work towards being a culturally competent educator. Perspective is everything, or the wise old saying “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes”, With that being said, I believe as an educator that it is important that the time is taken to consider what it might be like to be resettling into a new country. The challenges, stresses and fears that emerge with that task; and then realize that it is impossible for me to know exactly how difficult that experience is because I have not lived it. In conclusion, I believe it is of the essence to get to know the diverse families in my classroom, and extend a

hand up instead of a smack down. Yes, curriculum is important but as we all know, there is so much more to teaching than curriculum. I ensure that I do the extra things to make the migrant students in my classroom feel safe, secure and at ease; I have that control, along with every educator.

### **Strategies to Support Migrant Students**

In this paper I argue that migrant support in the classroom should be unique. I do not believe that you can treat all students the same because plain and simple, they are not all the same and they never were; but, now we have the research to back up the idea that every student is different, especially migrant students who need unique programming to find success. Just the same as I differentiate instructional strategies for my students that are disabled, I feel it is my obligation to do the same for my migrant students. Yes, English Language Learners are monitored much like a student with a cognitive or behavioral diagnosis but I am not talking about instructional support plans. I am addressing the classroom environment and the daily treatment of students as well as educators' ability to act in a culturally competent way so that students feel as though they have the same opportunities to learn like every other student in the classroom. I believe that being a culturally competent educator is extremely important and it is not achieved without hard work; however, when it comes to supporting migrant students in an equitable classroom I believe that striving to find them success through unique programming is just the same as finding success for my disabled or behavioral students.

Every classroom is a unique experience for students in large due to the educator that possess that space; therefore, I believe that the hidden curriculum plays a crucial role in the classroom and that it is the responsibility of each and every educator to ensure that it is treated with care and impacts all students positively. Walton (2005) defines the hidden curriculum as, "student

learning that takes place within the perimeter of a school that is not recorded or reflected within the official curriculum” (p.18). Most of the hidden curriculum in my classroom takes place within my classroom environment and it includes the behaviors, routines, and culture that I allow to persist on a daily basis whether positive or negative. When I realized that as an educator I have an extraordinary opportunity to make a difference, not only in my student’s lives but with my voice, when I stand up and say that things need to change or even when I was vulnerable enough to say the words, I need to change; it was a big step for me personally as a white female in a multicultural world. There is no shame in realizing that things have changed, research has happened and now I must change with the changes.

One way in particular that I use the hidden curriculum to support migrant students in my classroom is ensuring that derogatory behavior is not accepted; which I would like to presume goes without saying however, myself as an educator roughly three years ago may have heard a personal conversation between students without addressing it due to it being a possible *mind field*. This is the reason I believe in professionally developing oneself to be culturally competent and confident in the three domains of cultural competence; awareness, knowledge, and skills (Vega et al., 2015). In the last three years I have grown exponentially and as a result of that growth I no longer avoid those conversations for one main reason. In the past when I avoided those tough conversations because I was afraid of confronting the situation and causing conflict with the students involved, I was not stopping to think how the migrant student in my classroom felt overhearing that conversation. Moreover, the impact that those conversations had on their well-being or mental health. I have come to learn that conflict is a difference of opinions, it is not a negative word; it is a means of communication in which you understand the other person’s perspective and in most cases their unmet needs. By addressing that conversation it allows the

migrant and immigrant students in the classroom to feel safe which should be the number one goal in any classroom and for all students. It also fosters trust in my relationship with them because they believe that I have their best interest in mind.

Next, acculturation plays a crucial role in the relationship between immigrant children's well-being" (Shoshani et al., 2015). Given this information I understand that compassion, understanding, and empathy in the classroom goes a long way for migrant students given their fragility during the beginning stages of acculturation. Which signifies the important of ensuring that my students find comfort in my classroom and teaching strategies. A question I ask myself often while am planning lessons is, how can I help make my migrant students feel welcomed, and that their ideas, values, and insights are respected and accepted? Some ways I do this in my classroom are: using diverse resources and voices in the content and media I use. As well as, intentionally choosing my classroom decorations with the goal in mind of uplifting and allowing my migrants students to find themselves within my classroom décor. Lastly, in my experience there are many videos done with diverse voice profiles that could be a better option than the American accent to signal to migrant students that they are welcome here and that I respect and value their voice and intelligence. Although these examples are small things, sometimes it is the small things that make the difference. In conclusion as mentioned in the literature review by Vega et al., (2015) "schools have the potential to create positive learning environments that welcome migrant and refugee students and protect against mental health issues." (p. 361). From my standpoint the ideas I have mentioned here do just that.

Regardless of the strategy, whether it be the use of: compassion, understanding, empathy, respecting migrant student's culture, cultural competence, building a relationship first and foremost, or creating a classroom atmosphere and culture that they can feel safe and secure in. I

understand reflection as the top strategy toward being a culturally competent educator. My practice is far from perfect but sharing my trials and triumphs with you is the trajectory I chose to take, in order to advocate for migrant students mental health and well-being in the classroom during the period of acculturation.

### **Summary**

“It is not what you do; it’s why you do it that makes the difference” (Brene Brown, 2012, p.147). I have always viewed being an educator as involving many hats. The roles and responsibilities ever changing and emerging with society. This can lead to burnout and compassion fatigue; however, at the end of the day I believe to combat this, it is about giving my energy to what is most important. Compassion, empathy, and understanding go a long way. I whole heartedly believe that relationships make the world go around, they connect us to where we belong, and that connection helps us find fulfillment in our lives; therefore, I strive to be that person for all of my students while keeping an extra eye out for those with exceptional circumstances: the migrant and immigrant students in my classroom. Throughout this chapter: I have brought attention to a group of individuals you may not know much about, how pedagogy in my classroom is about who I am as an individual, micro-aggressions and how difficult they can be to realize and correct, and lastly, why I believe that an equitable classroom should be the only type of classroom that exists in an educator’s teaching philosophy. Migrant students’ lives are complex and given that information I believe that compassion, empathy, support, and/or understanding, could be all that migrant students need to feel like someone is on their side when it can feel like the world is against them. Life is hard, do not make it harder.

## **Chapter Four: Conclusion**

In this paper I argue that during acculturation and the upheaval involved in migration, migrant students are impacted negatively when it comes to their mental health and well-being; and as a result their support in the classroom should differ from students who do not face these challenges. In this chapter I will summarize the details of my paper as well as discuss how the success of my argument will lead to changing the way we think about the world, while connecting my paper to a wider context. In the first chapter I focused on my journey to this topic. I explained why the topic of migrant children's mental health and well-being is of the upmost important. I presented the argument of my paper, and set the intentions for what was to come. In the second chapter I focused on presenting the currently known knowledge on the topic of migrant student's mental health and well-being, through the topics of acculturation, mental disorders, and the importance of support. In the third chapter I addressed the application of my paper to teaching in regards to migrant students. I looked at my own journey while teaching at Burdett School, my trials and triumphs, how teaching pedagogy can help educators teach migrant students and how equitable classrooms are paramount to migrant student's success.

### **Summary**

In Chapter One I explore why I chose this topic and why this topic is significant. It was the time I spent at Burdett School that gave me the experience I needed to realize that I could give a voice to those that unfortunately still do not have one. In this paper I mainly address the Low German Mennonite students that I had the privilege to teach as they are my experience with migrant students but above that I am speaking to the topic of all migrant students. I address the impact we have on students when like my background it is white and involves white privilege; then, what happens when blinders are worn because the oppression of others does not impact us.

That, given the large number of immigrants that Canada has recently welcomed into our country is the very reason this topic has extreme significance; because, many of those migrant individuals resettling in their new host country are youth that will attend Canadian Schools and that will have needs within the classroom. Lastly, I introduce the three main claims to my argument: the negative impacts of acculturation on migrant youth, mental disorders and stressors that immigrant students may struggle, and the importance of unique support for migrant youth in the classroom.

In Chapter Two I delved into the current literature that has been found on my topic through the means of a literature review. I start my literature review with a terminology section where I defined the terms immigrant, migrant, acculturation as well as addressed the varying generations of immigrants and migrants. The main topics in my literature review were: acculturation and resettlement, mental disorders and stressors, and the importance of support.

Within the topic of acculturation and resettlement, I spoke about the ideas of family conflicts and the impact language brokering has on migrant students. In regard to acculturation the literature concludes, that acculturation is not experienced the same by all migrants but that the stress that is endured during this period of an immigrant's life can impact their life negatively. Transit period is another idea that the literature frequently mentioned in that there is a lot of stress involved with pre-migration, migration and then post-migration. Lastly, there is a significant impact to migrant's psychological distress when we consider: learning their host countries social norms, immigration status, and if they are a refugee, a series of other distresses.

Following that section, I covered externalized and internalized mental disorders and stressors that migrant children experience. It was found that mental disorders are more common in immigrant students and that those mental disorders have a direct impact on their academic

successes. Also, that migrant students are more at risk of experiencing: anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorders, and externalizing behaviors for example, physical outburst based on a series of internal and external circumstances. Lastly, discrimination in regard to migrant student's race, ethnicity, religion, language bias, and harmful dialogue were extremely influential in whether a migrant students was to experience psychological distress such as depression, or anxiety. The discrimination mentioned derived from racist acts but also unintentional micro-aggressions.

The last topic presented in my literature review was the importance of support in that, migrant children are the future of society and; therefore, it is important to support migrant children as they navigate their way through the education system. Not only is resettling into your host country stressful but while doing that migrant students are also expected to settle into an education system that most likely is very unfamiliar to them. The literature presents that schools as well as educators have a lot of control when it comes to the environment they create and the support that is available when it comes to migrant students.

The last chapter in this paper is the application chapter in which I discuss the ways in which what I know now influences the practical context of schools and classrooms. In this chapter I go through my experience while teaching at Burdett School including my trials and triumphs. I speak about the pedagogy to support migrant students in which I walk through my journey toward being a culturally competent educator, how I have been working towards ridding myself of my micro-aggressions, as well as the importance of an equitable classroom. Lastly, I talk about specific strategies that I have found useful in my journey towards a unique, equitable, safe and secure classroom for migrant students.

A lot of information has been presented within this paper and summarizing it is no easy task but, the success of this paper lies in the fact that it has the opportunity to service educators in their personal and professional lives as well as benefit migrant students. I hope the challenge is taken, and that it allows people to realize that this perspective could be a perspective that little is known about. Whether the content taken away from this paper is, one piece, or everything it has to offer, I hope educators incorporate what speaks to them into their perspective, practice, and/or personal life.

### **Implications**

In this section I will speak to how the success of my argument will lead to changing the way we think about the world, while connecting this paper to a wider context. In this paper I have successfully advanced my argument in the following ways. I have used a considerable amount of literature to support my argument that migrant children's mental health and well-being is impacted negatively when they migrate based on the upheaval involved in moving, forced or otherwise, as well as, acculturation; in turn, their support in the classroom should be unique. I included pedagogical tools to help educators make their classroom equitable as well as functional to support migrant students that are resettling. I did this through the words of my experience and journey; in which it important to note that<sup>72</sup> journeys are never ending. Lastly, I focused on more than just my triumphs, I shared trials that are not necessarily flattering but if they can help someone be better and do better for migrant students then to me they were well shared. Keep in mind that life is not full of only triumphs, we must fail, sometimes many times before we realize the right path.

The wider context I believe that this paper contributes to is: oppression via racism, multiculturalism and the need for migrant students to be advocated for, through equitable

classrooms. The old way of teaching is treating all students as if they are the same when in reality they are not, and never were. Focusing on migrant students is not something done in many classrooms and the need for that format to change is paramount. The theoretical implication of this paper is to shine a light on the disparities migrant students face as children of migrant worker in which there is a lot of research. I wanted to focus my efforts of acknowledging and combatting a disparity that is not often researched. I want to be a voice that prevents oppression from happening in classrooms especially through discrimination or not realizing migrant students' needs in the classroom during acculturation.

The changes in the world I would like to see happen because of this paper would be to advocate for students who do not normally have a voice. As well as, bring light to the disparity and oppression that these students face in classrooms during resettlement to a new country; especially as someone who recently moved cities and found that upheaval difficult having only moved two hours away from my home town; and, in reality there is not comparison. However, the point I am trying to make is that my mild form of upheaval is difficult (and is something that most people have likely experienced at some point in their life); therefore, given this new experience, I consider what it would be like to not move two hours away within the same province *but*, to move to a new country many hours away, with a different language that I do not speak, no family support, no job, and completely different cultural norms. I would like to see educators read this paper and realize both the impact they have and the difference they can make in these migrant students' mental health and well-being while migrant students navigate the list of things I just mentioned. If I can lead educators to see how stressful these students lives are during acculturation and as a result, change their perspectives toward migrant students in their classroom; the goal of this paper will have been achieved.

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